Fine, she said....

Maybe you'd like to take a look at this first, he said....

Handing her the manila envelope containing Thing Street Asylum, with an essay he'd written about Colonel Elliott at THE HOME in 1900.... Opposing Lady Clark....

Without even glancing at the cover, she handed it to a civil servant who emerged from the shadows in evening dress....

He'd been counting cigarettes....

At a roll-top desk....

He was Citizen Hearse....

He wore golden pince-nez....

She leaned back in her chair in front of the monitor.... Suddenly he noticed, it resembled a throne....

Sorry to do this to you, JOHNNY!

I-I-I AM J-Johnny, he st-stammered....

*****

50s Chic wandered from Thing Street crack-house to Thing Street crack-house. Butch followed with his videocam.

She was looking for accommodation for her funky 50s self, her delinquent cat Slim, and her World's Largest Privately-Owned Collection of Materials on Juvenile Delinquency and Porn. Johnny warned her that on Thing Street the first thing they'd want to know was if she was a Welfare Cheat, the second if she was on crack. Slum Landlords and other Oppressors weren't supposed to discriminate, but 50s Chic lived in the Enlightenment of Alapaloozah.

50s Chic had a job and wasn't (always) on crack, but she was a FREAK, so the cock-suckers slammed the door SMACK in her face as soon as she appeared on the typical dilapidated banister-missing Thing Street porch in her bright red-dyed hair-do with the prominent central bang, a tiny purse clutched in one hand, a fan in the other, clad in a loose blouse and tight slacks that made her thighs look like ice-cream cones....

She appeared on the veranda of Johnny's Chinese friend's landlord, the perfidious Citizen Hearse....

The scumbag thought she was another of his girls. He had so many, he couldn't keep track.

Citizen Hearse's girls waited on every corner of fair Thing Street's deceptively respectable-looking tree-lined streets. Behind them in squalid naked-bulb-illuminated cells in deceptively stately piles teemed even worse crack-heads than themselves. The constantly scurrying rats, roaches, and raccoons made sleep impossible and forced them onto the deceptively stately lawns where they drank, brawled, and shat all night right out in the open. Against such a background Citizen Hearse's girls moved like the classically beautiful figures on the frieze of a Grecian Urn....

This time the door swung open to the unspoken sesame of Thing Street's megapimp. In reality he had installed jeweled ball-bearing movements in the hinges and a self-lubricating track in the porch on which the door moved all night with the regularity of a pendulum and the mortality of a scythe....